

**Volunteers Green, Browns Court, Round Church Green
3 Parks Improvement Committee**

Minutes from meeting on 11/27/2023 APPROVED 12/12/2023

Attending in person: Members Kendra, Denise, Fran, Megan, Tess, Mary, Jeanne

Attending virtually : Jeff Forward, Martha Nye, Jon Kart

Public Comment Jeff presented Eagle Scout's plan for building a box to hold discarded American Flags.

Minutes from 11/9/23 meeting Approved w correction to spelling of a name.

Schedule next meetings Tuesday 12/12 and Thursday 12/28

Discussion of who to invite to the next meeting. Invite someone from baseball and soccer organizations.

Denise asked Jeff F about keeping a porta potty that is fully accessible close to the bandshell and playground area. Jeff suggested talking with Tyler about that.

Update / summary from Fran on zoning discussion with Tyler

Fran met with Tyler in order to determine what we can and cannot do re: zoning. Tyler is concerned about the town and FEMA rules regarding what can and cannot be built in the floodplain

Round Church Green - no problems with landscaping re zoning as it's not flood prone. Would need approval for any structures.

Volunteers Green - anything playground needs to stay within the footprint of the existing play area

tables, benches must be secured

roof of bandstand - roof area - maintenance is allowed. Discussion of extending the roof line. Will have to see proposals and designs.

Cannot add fill around the base of the bandstand re zoning (if add fill somewhere in the park have to take from somewhere else). Ramps and or steps to make it accessible will have to be presented for approval.

Discussion of what a paved or packed path around the VG area could look like w regards to material in a flood zone

Brown's Court - not a floodplain. Will need a site plan approval from zoning for a sports court but not with regards to flooding.

Discussed how, what and when we should present findings to and get clarification from Tyler and Josh. Having initial consensus from our group and then a designated person to meet with them vs. continual questions from each of us. We know that we have a very tight time frame and often need information from them before one of us can move on to the next step in our research.

Reports from members on their research since the 11/9 meeting:

Volunteers Green:

Playground structures - Jeanne

Meeting with reps from 3 companies to get 3 quotes. Kirsten Santor from the rec committee, who is more of the playground expert, and I have been meeting with each. We don't have any quotes yet but we think the cost of replacing the structure will be in the \$200,000 range. I'm not clear on how much it might cost to dismantle the old structure and to prepare the base for the build. We've asked each rep to include parts that they feel we could use local volunteer contractors or ways that volunteers can be used in the building process.

There are several types of bases that can be used. We currently have "engineered wood fiber". Getting more information from the reps to learn what would be best in a flood zone. I have given each rep the info about the mats that the town has in storage to see if those can be used.

Reported on the current benches and tables and their condition. Hoping to add an additional senior friendly table with room for own chairs

Discussed some immediate concerns about one of the slides on the current playground as well as the base under the swings. Jeanne will talk with Duncan about that. Reported on the number and the condition of the benches and tables in the area.

Side note - Jeanne and Mary reminded people about language with regard to discussing accessibility for people with a wide range of differing abilities, natural abilities vs "handicapped". Name the person or item first ie Person with differing abilities or Picnic table/bathroom that is accessible to all.

VOREC Grant (Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economy Grant)

The recreation committee previously pursued a VOREC grant to be used towards a new playground. That grant was denied. The rec committee was interested in pursuing the grant again after new money was announced this fall by the governor. Jeanne is working with them

to tweak the previous proposal to include the partnership with our two committees. They are submitting the proposal to the selectboard on Dec. 4 for approval. The application is for a \$100,000 grant to be used towards the cost of a new playground structure. Jeanne will continue to be a liaison between the two committees. Their next meeting is Dec. 5.

Band Stand and Band Stand area

Gary met with an engineer to discuss replacing failing trusses, replacing slab, cost of new wood floor over foundation. We need to pay a structural engineer/technical engineer to determine the work that needs to be done. The cost of hiring an engineer consultation could possibly be \$5000. Discussed using town budget money to secure quotes rather than wait for release of ARPA money in order to speed up that process.

Cement floor drainage – reach out to get a quote – Denise

Low vegetative barriers of some sort at the top of the steep bank to the river. Lower bushes that would define the edge but not block view. Jon Kart urged use of plants native to a floodplain forest. He offered to advise when needed.

Landscaping around the crabapple trees – Landensack memorial. Fran getting quotes Fran met with the tree warden to discuss trees and tree pruning. She is still gathering quotes for the work.

Round Church Green

Tree work - dead wood removed and tree pruning. Will be included in quote for all 3 parks. Discussion of the historic fence that was originally around the green and would we suggest a replacement fence.

Browns Court

Pickle ball/tennis courts

Tess has been trying to contact 3 different companies for quotes but not getting much response. She had been communicating with Vermont Tennis Court resurfacing from St. Johnsbury. Discussing types of surfaces and how often they need to be resurfaced. What type of fencing is needed. Getting information about maintenance has also been difficult. Many of the pickleball courts are on converted tennis courts that were already 20 years old.

The park will only accommodate one court. A tennis size court can hold 4 pickleball courts. There are some that can have been used by both but that requires different netting and marking. A tennis court accommodates maximum 4 players at a time while a pickleball court could accommodate up to 16 people at one time. Discussed signage that would be needed to designate times of use if a shared space. Who would manage that

Bocce ball

Tess is still researching bocce ball. There is a Burlington Bocce league and she is trying to find a contact. Martha suggested the person who lives on Huntington Rd. Jeanne will try to connect with him.

Future meetings should include

Talking with someone from soccer and baseball. Perhaps Annie Lajoie. Annie was not aware that there was any money in the town budget for soccer.

Upcoming meeting with Brown's Court residents

Denise reported that she will be meeting some residents near Brown's Court this week, along with someone from parking, to discuss some of our proposals and to hear residents' concerns regarding recreation at Brown's Court park.

How to present our findings to the selectboard

We agreed that our task is to present items that will bring our 3 parks back to places we are proud of. The ongoing maintenance responsibilities and care of the parks will then be determined by the town and the various town committees. We need to look at the overall 3 parks improvements and recommend our suggestions.

We discussed not getting bogged down with the what/if the ARPA funds do not cover all of the suggestions. The selectboard should determine what and if other areas of the town budget (such as the conservation funds or the recreation funds) would pay for if they determine ARPA money is not appropriate. But we DO want to include all of these items in our list of suggestions. We'll have gathered many expert opinions and a lot of community input that should be shared. This may be the one opportunity we have to get these parks back to their original glory.

We will outline our findings and recommendations to the selectboard by the March deadline. The plan for how to present will be at a future meeting.